

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 12182

EXDIS

TO THE SECRETARY AND DEPUTY SECRETARY AND AMBASSADOR YOUNG
FROM ASSISTANT SECRETARY MAYNES

E.O. 11652: XGDS
TAGS: ILO
SUBJECT: ILO

REF: GENEVA 6030

1. SUMMARY DURING MY PRE-GENERAL ASSEMBLY CONSULTATIONS HERE, EGYPTIAN OFFICIALS INCLUDING THE FOREIGN MINISTER HAVE OFFERED TO HELP MOBILIZE SPECIAL EFFORTS BY THE G-77 BETWEEN NOW AND NOVEMBER 1977 WHICH MIGHT ENABLE U.S. TO REMAIN IN THE ILO AND RETAIN ITS CREDIBILITY. I BELIEVE THAT WE SHOULD EXPLORE THESE POSSIBILITIES WITH A VIEW TO IDENTIFYING WHAT WE NEED TO STAY IN. WE COULD THEN ATTEMPT TO WORK WITH EGYPT AND OTHER MODERATE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES TO ACHIEVE SUFFICIENT PROGRESS BETWEEN NOW AND NOVEMBER TO PERMIT THE PRESIDENT TO ALLOW THE U.S. TO REMAIN ILO MEMBER. END SUMMARY.

2. PRIOR TO MY ARRIVAL IN CAIRO, EGYPTIAN OFFICIALS ASKED EMBASSY TO INCLUDE ILO ON AGENDA OF TOPICS FOR MY DISCUSSIONS. ISSUE FIRST CAME UP IN DISCUSSIONS WITH AMRE MMOUSSA, DIRECTOR OF THE INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS BUREAU OF THE FOREIGN
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MINISTRY. MMOUSSA STATED THAT OUTCOME OF JUNE 1977 CONFERENCE HAD NOT BEEN AS DESTRUCTIVE OF U.S. INTERESTS AS SOME CONTESTED. CONSEQUENTLY, THERE WAS NO REASON FOR U.S. TO WITHDRAW. BUT HE ASKED OUR ASSESSMENT. I NOTED THAT BECAUSE OF THE ILO'S TRIPARTITE NATURE, SEVERAL PARTIES WOULD MAKE AN ASSESSMENT. THE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND AFL-CIO HAD ALREADY MADE THEIRS AND HAD REACHED A DECISION SEPARATELY TO

RECOMMEND STRONGLY TO THE PRESIDENT THAT THE U.S. WITHDRAW FROM THE ILO. THE USG WAS STILL REVIEWING THE SITUATION BUT I NOTED THAT IN THE FACE OF THE CONFERENCE RESULTS MANY WITHIN THE GOVERNMENT BELIEVED WE SHOULD WITHDRAW QUIETLY.

3. I NOTED THAT DILEMMA FACING THE PRESIDENT WAS THAT NEGATIVE EVIDENCE FROM JUNE 1977 CONFERENCE WAS ALREADY ON THE TABLE. IT WAS NOW FOLLOWED BY THE STRONG RECOMMENDATIONS FOR WITHDRAWAL FROM THE CHAMBER AND THE AFL-CIO. MEANWHILE, WE COULD SEE NO OTHER OPPORTUNITY WITHIN THE ILO FOR ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE TO BE DEVELOPED. THERE WERE SIMPLY NO ILO MEETINGS BETWEEN NOW AND NOVEMBER 1977 WHEN THE US LETTER OF INTENT TO WITHDRAW WOULD TAKE EFFECT. DID HE DISAGREE WITH THIS?

4. MMOUSSA SAID THAT HE DIFFERED IN ONE IMPORTANT RESPECT. ALTHOUGH IT WAS TRUE THERE WERE NO FORMAL MEETINGS SCHEDULED WITHIN THE ILO DURING THE NEXT THREE MONTHS, THERE REMAINED OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACTION. THE CONFERENCE BY HIS READING HAD NOT REJECTED THE US PROPOSALS FOR AMENDING ARTICLE 17 IN ORDER TO SCREEN OUT NON-GERMANE RESOLUTIONS; RATHER IT HAD REFERRED THEM TO A WORKING GROUP WHICH WOULD ALSO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT OTHER STRUCTURAL ISSUES. HE SAW NO REASON WHY THIS WORKING GROUP COULD NOT MEET SEVERAL TIMES BETWEEN NOW AND NOVEMBER TO DEVELOP A COMPROMISE SOLUTION. WHILE HE ACKNOWLEDGED THAT ANY SOLUTION WOULD HAVE TO BE ADOPTED BY THE FULL CONFERENCE, WHICH WOULD NOT MEET UNTIL JUNE 1978, ENOUGH PROGRESS COULD BE MADE FOR THE UNITED STATES TO ESTABLISH PUBLICLY CONFIDENTIAL

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THAT IT HAD OBTAINED ITS MAJOR OBJECTIVES. MMOUSSA CAUTIONED THAT FOLLOWING THIS SCENARIO US WOULD HAVE TO SHOW ITSELF WILLING TO COMPROMISE ON SOME OF THE STRUCTURAL ISSUES WHICH WERE OF INTEREST TO THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES. BUT WE COULD MAKE PROGRESS ON ISSUES OF CONCERN TO US IF WE WOULD ONLY TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE PRINCIPAL RULE OF MULTILATERAL DIPLOMACY WHICH WAS THAT ONE HAD TO MAKE A GENUINE EFFORT TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE INTERESTS OF OTHERS.

5. THE FOLLOWING DAY AMBASSADOR EILTS AND I CALLED ON FOREIGN MINISTER FAHM6, WHOSE GENERAL APPROACH TOWARD THE ILO MADE IT CLEAR THAT HE WOULD NOT PLEAD WITH US TO STAY IN, BUT WHO ALSO SAID THAT HE WOULD WORK WITH US TO MAKE SUFFICIENT PROGRESS TO ENABLE US TO REMAIN. AFTER DISCUSSING THE PERIOD UP TO THE CONFERENCE, FAHMY ACKNOWLEDGED THAT OUR POSITION MAY HAVE BEEN MORE FLEXIBLE THAN OTHERS PORTRAYED OR UNDERSTOOD; NEVERTHELESS, HE ARGUED, WE SUFFERED FROM THE DECISIVE HANDICAP THAT THE 1975 LETTER OF INTENT TO WITHDRAW, REGARDLESS OF ITS CAREFUL WORDING, WAS SEEN AS A POSITION OF "TAKE IT OR LEAVE IT" ULTIMATUM. NATION STATES COULD NOT DEAL WITH THAT KIND OF APPROACH EXCEPT TO REJECT IT TOTALLY EVEN IF THEY WERE ANXIOUS TO WORK WITH THE UNITED STATES. HE NOTED THAT IT WOULD BE PARTICULARLY FOOLISH FOR THE

U.S. TO LEAVE THE ILO NOW. IF WE MADE PROGRESS ON THE MIDDLE EAST IN THE NEXT YEAR, WE WOULD SUDDENLY FIND THAT A LARGE NUMBER OF STATES SHARED OUR VIEWS ABOUT MANY OF THE PROBLEMS RAISED IN THE U.S. LETTER OF INTENT TO WITHDRAW.

6. FAHMY THEN INSTRUCTED MMOUSSA TO WORK WITH OTHER MEMBERS OF THE NON-ALIGNED TO SEE WHETHER SUFFICIENT PROGRESS COULD NOT BE MADE IN THE WORKING GROUP BETWEEN NOW AND NOVEMBER TO PERMIT THE UNITED STATES TO REMAIN IN THE ILO. MOUSSA STATED THAT EGYPT ITSELF IS NOT A MEMBER OF THE WORKING GROUP. FAHMY ANSWERED THAT EGYPT SHOULD WORK WITH THOSE NON-ALIGNED WHO ARE INVOLVED TO SEE WHAT COULD BE DONE. I INFORMED FAHMY THAT WE PROBABLY WOULD WISH TO TALK WITH HIS COLLEAGUES FURTHER ABOUT THESE MATTERS IN THE FUTURE.

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7. COMMENT: I BELIEVE THIS EGYPTIAN OFFER MAY REPRESENT A MAJOR OPPORTUNITY PROVIDED WE DO NOT EXPECT TOO MUCH FROM THE EGYPTIANS. MY TALKS HERE UNDERScoreD IN THIS REGARD A POINT WE ALREADY KNEW: BARRED BY THE SINAI II AGREEMENTS FROM MILITARY ACTION, EGYPT SEES DIPLOMATIC ACTION AGAINST ISRAEL IN INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AS NOW THE ONLY TOOL REMAINING TO IT TO REMIND US AND OTHERS OF THE URGENCY FOR MOVEMENT TOWARDS SETTLEMENT. ONE SENIOR EGYPTIAN OFFICIAL, IN FACT, PUT THE ISSUE IN PRECISELY THOSE WORDS. HE TOLD ME THAT ALTHOUGH EGYPT COULD NOT TAKE MILITARY ACTION GIVEN THE AGREEMENTS IT HAD SIGNED, IT COULD REMIND ISRAEL AND ITS FRIENDS AT EVERY OCCASION THAT ISRAEL COULD NOT BE A FULL MEMBER OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY UNLESS IT AGREED TO MOVE TOWARDS A FINAL MIDDLE EAST SETTLEMENT. EVEN SO, THE EGYPTIANS SEEM TO WANT TO HELP US. I THINK THEY WILL WORK HARD TO SEE WHETHER TOGETHER WE CANNOT FIND SOME WAY OUT OF THE ILO GLUE POT. IN MY OPINION IT IS WORTH A TRY AND I STRONGLY RECOMMEND THAT WE BEGIN TO DEVELOP THE OUTLINES OF A COMPROMISE THAT WOULD SAVE FACE ALL AROUND AND PROMOTE OUR INTERESTS AT THE SAME TIME.

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